

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 28TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2024

The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above date at 12:00 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with Mr. Greg Young, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioner Atkins, Cothran, Gage-Watts, Thomas, and G. Young (5). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Jones, and J. Young (3).

Mr. Thomas gave the Pledge of Allegiance, and the invocation was given by Mrs. Gage-Watts.

There were no Agenda Additions nor any public comments, so the Committee moved onto New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Continue Discussion on Living Wage Ordinance extending to those we contract with*

Mr. G. Young advised this topic will not be discussed today; it will be included in the next meeting.

- *Continue Discussion related to establishing a Film and Entertainment Sub-Committee*

Mr. G. Young also wanted to delay this topic to the next meeting. Mr. Atkins mentioned Mr. Granville from a previous meeting, and asked that Mr. Greg Kallenberg (Film Prize) and Mr. Goodman be included in those discussions. Mr. G. Young agreed and thanked Mr. Atkins for the recommendation.

Mr. Cothran said that there is so much talent in this community. Mrs. Gage-Watts agreed and mentioned how people are excited about the entertainment industry and having Caddo camera ready. She is eager to get appointments on the committee.

Mr. Thomas echoed the same sentiments as his colleagues and is proud that Caddo is taking the initiative and creating this committee. He feels that this will create opportunities for both youth and adults. He mentioned the presentations bring uniqueness. Mr. Thomas spoke of Mr. Granville and Mr. Jackson on their presentations and how we should get all of those people in one room to discuss this further.

Mr. G. Young said that the young people are leaving this community. He believes that there should be every economic opportunity to keep young people here. Mr. G. Young mentioned that he wants to get some things accomplish and the lack of economy is the biggest problem in the community. He envisioned that the board starting off with ten members, but may grow, and they will have to determine how big the board will be.

Several organizations, including the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourism Bureau, have an interest in re-establishing the film and entertainment industry. The City of Shreveport and Bossier are also launching ideas.

Mr. G. Young would like us to be the epicenter of film and entertainment. He said that there are several moving parts to making a movie. He also mentioned scoring for movies and spoke on the movie Psycho and how Mr. Granville assisted with that.

Mr. G. Young wants to send our Administrator to the Grammy and Academy awards as a representative of the Parish. She can be the grand staple, he said. He spoke on tracking talent and the different organizations to attract film and entertainment workers because the community is thriving.

Mr. Atkins agreed that Mr. G. Young is on the right path to building local talent, and the film industry is transient. He likes growing the local talent and suggested what strategic niche where the Parish can get a competitive advantage.

Mr. Thomas suggested communicating with Fulton County Films with regards to the tax incentives for bringing films to Caddo Parish.

Mr. G. Young suggested having the board up and running prior to the Parks & Recreation Awards ceremony that will be held in Atlanta. He said that Mrs. Bryant will be at the ceremony, so they could get more bang for their buck. Mr. G. Young explained that she could meet with the film and entertainment professionals in Fulton County. He would also like Mr. Grandville and Mr. Kallenberg to attend, if their schedules allow.

Mr. Cothran mentioned going public but not public to get some excitement in the youth. He suggested having young minds to provide insight on what it would take to keep them here. Mr. G. Young agreed and said, "How could we really make this cool?" He mentioned diversity and sending some of the Commissioners out to get people involved.

Mrs. Gage-Watts agreed with getting the younger generations involved. There are so many gems in this Parish, she said.

Mr. Thomas loved the idea of having Mrs. Bryant networking while visiting Atlanta. He suggested a Zoom call if they aren't able to meet with the film industry in Fulton County. He stated he is excited and this is a benefit coming from the NABCO conference. Mr. Thomas also suggested creating sub-committees for the proposed Entertainment Committee since there are several categories when making movies.

Mr. G. Young thinks this will be a big endeavor and believes Mrs. Bryant would be better equipped to lead this effort.

- *Discussion of establishing a Land Bank*

Mr. G. Young brought forth this idea due to his recent trip to NOBCO.

Attorney Bernstein said that land banks are an independent agency. Those agencies are legally able to acquire property, extinguish liens, clear the titles, transfer those properties, and put them back on the tax rolls. This includes adjudicated properties. He said that Land banks work best when there is a large inventory of adjudicated properties, have properties with the title, and auction sales. Land Banks are funded with a pot of money they can use to rehab properties and make them marketable. State legislation and a local ordinance is needed to create the Land Banks. Land banks are in 13 States, and there are 300 nation banks nationwide.

Mr. Atkins thanked Attorney Bernstein for advising him what a landbank was and asked how large the organization in regards to employees and operating costs. Attorney Bernstein advised that it varies depending on the funding/grants, taxes, self-generating revenue, etc. He also mentioned that Landbanks do need seed money.

Mr. Atkins also asked how difficult it is to clear the title. Attorney Bernstein explained that state legislation would provide the process for the Landbank to clear the title. He further explained the process is similar to Reinvest Caddo, but on a larger scale. The organization would have resources and staff to acquire and rehab properties.

Attorney Bernstein also mentioned that there will be a Constitutional Amendments regarding adjudicated properties. If it passes, Landbanks will fit in the new system. Instead of a tax title, it will become a lien. These liens will be able to be bought, similar to a mortgage. This will make it easier to clear the title once it comes into place in the next year and a half.

Mr. G. Young stated the challenge would be getting our lobbyists to Baton Rouge to write legislation to shorten the time period to clear titles. He mentioned one state was able to complete the process in 12 months; another state was able to complete it in two months, but there will be a due process.

Mr. G. Young said that this board might be better served to stay under the Commission, similar to the Industrial Development Board.

He also mentioned Project 5,000, which is to take 5,000 blighted properties and make them marketable and back on the tax rolls. Mr. Atkins suggested partnering with the City of Shreveport since the majority of the property are within the city limits. He hopes to hire a director to get some of the funding mentioned by Mr. Bernstein.

Mr. Cothran asked about the prevention of slum lords. He wanted to know whose responsible for the slum laws. Attorney Bernstein advised the Landbank sales are private transactions, not sheriff's sales. He cannot say if that will be excluded, but it will be accessible to ordinary folks.

Mrs. Bryant advised she is learning a lot in this conversation and getting more information on how to proceed.

Mr. Bernstein said the legislation can be very protective.

Mr. G. Young said a resolution is needed to begin engaging in conversation with the legislature.

It was **moved by Mrs. Commissioner Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Commissioner, *to recommend to the full body a resolution to establish land banks. Motion carried*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioner Atkins, Cothran, Gage-Watts, Thomas, and G. Young (5). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Jones, and J. Young (3). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- *Discussion of Economic Development packets, evaluation and deadlines*

Finance Director Haley Barnett advised Economic Development applications are treated the same as riverboat NGO applications, with the exception of the rule for mid-year amendments. She further explained that economic opportunities constantly arise. Packets were provided for scoring.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know if the outreach for Economic Development is similar to the

outreach for NGOs. Mrs. Barnett said that it is the same.

Mrs. Bryant said that there is not an open process for economic development. Mrs. Barnett explained that economic development is more flexible than NGOs, but one of the requirements is an economic impact study.

Mr. G. Young would like more communication regarding this process. Mr. Cothran asked for institutional knowledge regarding the economic development process. Mr. Thomas suggested having a retreat with the Commissioners explaining each committee and their purpose.

Mr. Burrell talked about the scoring matrix for evaluating economic development applications. He suggested more consistency while scoring.

Mr. Cothran brought up duplication of services in the community that is funded by the Parish of Caddo. He would like to take a deeper dive in this conversation at a later date.

The deadline to turn in the scored economic development applications is September 5, 2024.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:24 p.m.



Ashlyn King
Office Specialist



Michelle Nations
Assistant to the Commission Clerk